

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 277235

44

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OGEN, PFOR, BU

SUBJECT: 1976 ANNUAL POLICY ASSESSMENT: BULGARIA

1. AN INTERAGENCY GROUP HAS REVIEWED THE EMBASSY'S
1976 POLICY ASSESSMENT TOGETHER WITH THOSE FOR
CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY. A SEPARATE TELEGRAM STATE
(213857) HAS BEEN SENT ON THE DISCUSSION OF SEVERAL
THEMES COMMON TO U.S. RELATIONS WITH ALL THREE COUNTRIES.
THIS MESSAGE RESPONDS SPECIFICALLY TO EMBASSY SOFIA'S
ASSESSMENT AND SETS FORTH POLICY OBJECTIVES AND COURSES

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 277235

OF ACTION FOR U.S. RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA. THE REVIEW

GROUP COMMENDS THE EMBASSY FOR ITS COGENT, WELL-WRITTEN AND THOUGHTFUL ASSESSMENT.

2. OUR OVERALL STRATEGY FOR EASTERN EUROPE CONTINUES TO BE AIMED TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ALL THE INDIVIDUAL STATES AS INDEPENDENT ENTITIES AND THE EXPANSION OF THE REGION'S CONTACTS WITH THE WEST. IN SOUTHEASTERN EUROPE THIS MEANS ENCOURAGING GOVERNMENTAL POLICIES INDEPENDENT OF MOSCOW ON THE PART OF THE NATIONS OF THE AREA INCLUDING, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, BULGARIA AS WELL. WE ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN PROMOTING OFFICIAL BULGARIAN ATTITUDES WHICH ARE MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE.

3. IN VIEW OF THE UNIQUELY CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BULGARIA AND THE USSR WE MUST PURSUE OUR GOALS WITH CIRCUMSPECTION AND CAUTION. THE APPARENT RELIABILITY OF BULGARIA IN SOVIET EYES SHOULD NOT PREVENT US FROM SEEKING TO BREAK DOWN SOME OF THE EXISTING BARRIERS BETWEEN BULGARIA AND THE UNITED STATES. WITHIN THE LIMITS OF OUR OWN INTERESTS, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ADJUST TO WHATEVER PACE AND EXTENT OF NORMALIZATION BULGARIA IS WILLING TO SUSTAIN WITH US.

4. WE AGREE THAT OUR SPECIFIC INTERESTS IN BULGARIA ARE:

(A) STABILITY IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND PARTICULARLY IN THE BALKANS, IN TERMS OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS BETWEEN BULGARIA AND ITS BALKAN NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING GREECE AND TURKEY; AND ESPECIALLY BULGARIAN RESTRAINT VIS-A-VIS POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA, ESPECIALLY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR PERENNIAL DISPUTE OVER MACEDONIA.

(B) GREATER OPENNESS IN ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST, INCLUDING THE U.S., IN ORDER TO DIMINISH BULGARIAN RELIANCE ON THE USSR.

(C) BROADER U.S. ACCESS TO THE BULGARIAN LEADERS AND SUB-ELITES IN ORDER TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO THINK MORE IN SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 277235

TERMS OF NATIONAL SELF-INTEREST OR THE MERITS OF ISSUES, AT LEAST IN MATTERS THAT ARE NOT OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE TO THE USSR.

(D) INCREASED TRADE, ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. VISIBLE ENOUGH THAT THE BULGARIAN BUREAUCRACY AND SUB-ELITES WILL COME TO ACCEPT THEM AS NORMAL.

(E) DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIME WHICH IS MORE SENSITIVE TO THE NATIONAL TRADITIONS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE BULGARIAN PEOPLE, AND WHICH WILL NOT COMPROMISE ITS INTERESTS IN FAVOR OF SOVIET INTERESTS.

5. OUR RECORD SINCE THE LAST ASSESSMENT CYCLE IS FOR THE MOST PART POSITIVE, AND THERE HAS BEEN CONTINUED PROGRESS SINCE SUBMISSION OF THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT. OUR NEGOTIATORS HAVE AGREED UPON A PROPOSED TEXT FOR THE CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AND ARE READY TO WORK OUT A PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES. WE REGARD THE VISIT OF SECRETARY BUTZ TO SOFIA AS SUCCESSFUL, BOTH IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE IN WHICH HE DISCUSSED THE GENERAL OUTLINES OF A JOINT STATEMENT ON AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION,

AND WITH REGARD TO DIVIDED FAMILIES. WE IN TURN HAVE ADVISED THE GOB OF OUR DECISION TO PERMIT THE OPENING OF A BULGARIAN COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN THE U.S. OUR TRADE HAS CONTINUED TO INCREASE, ALTHOUGH AT A SLOWER RATE THAN IN THE PAST. THE BULGARIANS HAVE AGREED TO MEET WITH THE FOREIGN BONDHOLDERS PROTECTIVE COUNCIL IN NEW YORK IN SEPTEMBER TO BEGIN WORKING TOWARDS A SETTLEMENT OF DEFAULTED PRE-WAR DOLLARS BONDS. ADDITIONALLY, THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AT LAST RESPONDED FAVORABLY TO OUR PROPOSAL FOR RE-IPROCAL ELIMINATION OF TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND POINT OF ENTRY CONTROLS. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THE GOB RECORD ON IMPLEMENTING SUCH CSCE PROVISIONS AS REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES AND INFORMATION HAS BEEN LAGGARD. MEDIA CRITICISM OF THE U.S. AND ITS OFFICIALS AND POLICIES ACTUALLY SEEMS TO HAVE INCREASED OF LATE.

6. FUTURE TRENDS AND PROBLEMS.

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SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 277235

(A) OVERALL EAST-WEST RELATIONS. THE US-USSR RELATIONSHIP IS LIKELY TO HAVE AN IMPORTANT BEARING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. FUTURE TRENDS IN DETENTE POLICY AND THE PROSPECT OF THE REVIEW OF CSCE RESULTS IN BELGRADE IN 1977 MAY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE KINDS OF THINGS WE ARE TRYING TO DO WITH BULGARIA.

(B) THE YUGOSLAV SUCCESSION QUESTION. WHILE WE EXPECT YUGOSLAVIA TO SUCCESSFULLY RIDE OUT THE IMMEDIATE POST-TITO SUCCESSION PERIOD, WE CANNOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOB WOULD BE A WILLING PARTNER IN SOVIET MACHINATIONS DIRECTED AT YUGOSLAVIA. ANY ACTIVITY ON THE PART OF THE BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT OR ANY ACTIVITY DIRECTED THROUGH BULGARIA WHICH WOULD THREATEN THE

STABILITY OF YUGOSLAVIA OR SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A CRITICAL SITUATION IN YGOSLAVIA WOULD BE OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE AND CONCERN TO U.S.

(C) MULTILATERAL ISSUES. BULGARIA'S INCREASING INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS REQUIRES A SPECIFIC EFFORT ON OUR PART IN RESPONSE. WE AGREE WITH THE EMBASSY THAT THE BULGARIANS HAVE INCREASED THEIR RESPECTABILITY IN BOTH WESTERN EUROPE AND THE THIRD WORLD, WHICH HAS BEEN FACILITATED BY THE EXISTENCE OF BULGARIA'S AGRARIAN UNION PARTY AS A CONVENIENT "FRONT" FOR DEALING WITH SOME COUNTRIES. WE MAY HAVE MADE SOME PROGRESS IN PERSUADING THE GOB TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT ON THE PUERTO RICAN ISSUE. IN GENERAL, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO GET COOPERATION FROM THE BULGARIANS ON ANY ISSUES OF REAL INTEREST TO THE SOVIETS. WE AGREE WITH THE EMBASSY THAT NEVERTHELESS, WE SHOULD CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO MAKE OUR VIEWS KNOWN TO THE BULGARIANS, IN PART IN THE EXPECTATION THAT THERE WILL BE SOME FEEDBACK TO THE SOVIET UNION.

7. FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION.

(A) WE AGREE WITH THE EMBASSY'S WATCHWORDS OF "SLOW AND STEADY." WE SHOULD ATTEMPT PRIMARILY TO STRENGTHEN THE TIES WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY CREATED AND TO "NORMALIZE" SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 277235

AND BROADEN THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. WE BELIEVE WE ARE NEARING WHAT MIGHT BE CALLED THE "END OF THE BEGINNING" IN U.S.-BULGARIAN RELATIONS, AND THAT THE TIME IS APPROACHING FOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION OF HOW FAR WE HAVE COME AND WHERE WE MIGHT GO FROM HERE.

(B) IN ADDITION, WE HAVE AGREED ON THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC PRIORITY COURSES OF ACTION:

(1) CONCLUDE THE CULTURAL/SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AND A PROGRAM OF EXCHANGES FOR THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF THE AGREEMENT AS SOON AS THE GOB IS PREPARED TO DO SO.

(2) ENCOURAGE APPROPRIATE SENIOR-LEVEL U.S. VISITS TO BULGARIA TO CONTINUE THE NORMALIZATION OF CONTACTS SUCH AS THOSE BEGUN BY THE VISITS OF UNDER SECRETARY COMPBELL, DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL, AND SECRETARY BUTZ. WE SHOULD ALSO ENCOURAGE U.S. VISITS BY SENIOR-LEVEL BULGARIAN FIGURES. ON THE LATTER, WE SEE TWO POSSIBILITIES AT THIS TIME: NACHO PAPZOV IN HIS CAPACITY AS HEAD OF THE COMMITTEE OF SCIENCE,

TECHNICAL PROGRESS AND HIGH EDUCATION, AND MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE KRUSTEV, WHO COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ACCEPT SECRETARY BUTZ'S INVITATION AND DURING HIS VISIT SIGN THE ANTICIPATED JOINT STATEMENT OF COOPERATION ON AGRICULTURE.

(3) CONTINUE TO PRESS THE GOB TO SETTLE DIVIDED FAMILY CASES AS A PART OF THE PROCESS OF NORMALIZATION AND OF THE FULFILLMENT OF CSCE PRINCIPLES.

(4) FACILITATE AND ENCOURAGE CONCLUSION AT AN EARLY DATE OF AN AGREEMENT WITH THE BONDHOLDERS COUNCIL ON DEFAULTED DOLLAR BONDS.

(5) CONCLUDE A STATEMENT ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND BULGARIA, AND, FOLLOWING THE RECENT ACCREDITATION OF A U.S. AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE TO BULGARIA MAKE FULL USE OF HIS POSSIBILITIES FOR INCREASING AGRICULTURAL
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SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 277235

TRADE AND COOPERATION.

(6) CONTINUE TO PRESS THE BULGARIANS TO FULFILL THE COMMITMENTS MADE IN THE HELSINKI CSCE FINAL ACT, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELD OF DISSEMINATION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.

(7) EXPLORE OTHER AREAS OF POSSIBLE DISCUSSION AND COOPERATION, E.G., CUSTOMS COOPERATION IN THE DRUG CONTROL FIELD, FISHERIES PROBLEMS, ETC. KISSINGER

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